

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-20. (canceled)

21. (currently amended) An apparatus for controlling units within a continuous flow from at least one incoming feeder track into at least one outgoing feeder track, said apparatus comprising:

at least one shifting device for controlled shifting of said flow from said incoming feeder track into a plurality of selectable paths of said outgoing feeder track; and,

a control device capable of controlling speeds of each said unit and of determining proper shifting of said shifting device,

wherein said control device is arranged for speed control of said shifting device so as to accelerate said units in said shifting device, thereby providing~~allows for~~ separation of said units with respect to one another in a longitudinal direction of flow while each unit is guided to a selected path of said outgoing feeder track, said separation allowing for said controlled shifting without arresting said continuous flow.

22. (original) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said control device operates in dependence of the speed of each said unit from said incoming feeder track and the properties of said shifting device and said outgoing feeder track.

23. (original) The apparatus according to claim 21, further comprising means for shifting said shifting device.

24. (original) The apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said means for shifting said shifting device is a motor controlled by commands from said control device.

25. (original) The apparatus according to claim 21, further comprising means for controlling the speeds of each said unit.

26. (original) The apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said means for controlling the speeds of each said unit operates to accelerate each said unit along conveyor means.

27. (original) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein each said unit is accelerated along said shifting device to a speed exceeding the speed of said flow from said incoming feeder track.

28. (original) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said incoming feeder track is arranged for feeding units at a variable speed, while said shifting device is arranged for a constant speed.

29. (original) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said plurality of selectable paths are horizontally spaced.

Claim 30 (canceled)

31. (original) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said at least one shifting device is pivotally arranged about a pivoting axis.

32. (original) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said selectable paths are substantially parallel to one another.

33. (currently amended) An apparatus for controlling units within a continuous flow from at least one incoming feeder track into at least one outgoing feeder track, said apparatus comprising:

at least one shifting device for controlled shifting of said flow from said incoming feeder track into a plurality of selectable paths of said outgoing feeder track;

means for shifting said shifting device;

means for controlling speeds of each said unit in said shifting device; and,

a control device capable of controlling said means for shifting said shifting device and said means for controlling the speeds of each said unit, wherein said control device operates in dependence of the speed of each said unit from said incoming feeder track and the properties of said shifting device and said outgoing feeder track,

wherein said control device is arranged for speed control of said means for controlling speeds of each said unit so as to accelerate said units in said shifting device in order to allow for separation of said units with respect to one another in a longitudinal direction of flow while each unit is guided to a selected path of said outgoing feeder track, said separation allowing for said controlled shifting without arresting said continuous flow.

34. (original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said means for shifting said shifting device is a motor controlled by commands from said control device.

35. (original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein each said unit is accelerated along said shifting device

to a speed exceeding the speed of said flow from said incoming feeder track.

36. (original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said incoming feeder track is arranged for feeding units at a variable speed, while said shifting device is arranged for a constant speed.

37. (original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said plurality of selectable paths are horizontally spaced.

Claim 38 (canceled)

39. (original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said at least one shifting device is pivotally arranged about a pivoting axis.

40. (original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said selectable paths are substantially parallel to one another.

41. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said speed control is arranged to accelerate said units so as to provide a separation of at least a minimum distance between two consecutive units which allows said controlled shifting into said selectable paths.

42. (new) The apparatus according to claim 41, wherein the shifting unit is arranged so that said minimum distance between two consecutive units is maintained at a position where said units leave said shifting unit and enter said outgoing feeder track.

43. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said shifting unit comprises transport devices acting

transversally or vertically upon said units while feeding and guiding said units.

44. (new) The apparatus according to claim 31, wherein the shifting unit is pivotally arranged about an imaginary axis extending generally in the vertical direction.

45. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said incoming feeder track comprises a transport device for controlling and feeding said units at a predetermined speed in a direction towards the shifting unit.

46. (new) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said shifting unit is arranged for guiding at least two units simultaneously.

47. (new) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said speed control is arranged to accelerate said units so as to provide a separation of at least a minimum distance between two consecutive units which allows said controlled shifting into said selectable paths.

48. (new) The apparatus according to claim 47 wherein the shifting unit is arranged so that said minimum distance between two consecutive units is maintained at a position where said units leave said shifting unit and enter said outgoing feeder track.

49. (new) The apparatus according to claim 33 wherein said shifting unit comprises transport devices acting transversally or vertically upon said units while feeding and guiding said units.

50. (new) The apparatus according to claim 39 wherein the shifting unit is pivotally arranged about an imaginary axis extending generally in the vertical direction.

51. (new) The apparatus according to claim 33 wherein said incoming feeder track comprises a transport device for controlling and feeding said units at a predetermined speed in a direction towards the shifting unit.

52. (new) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said shifting unit is arranged for guiding at least two units simultaneously.